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Sent: Friday, March 10, 2006 11:02 AM
To: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov
Subject: MLPAComments: Central Coast MPA

As a lifelong diver who has been enjoying Monterey Bay waters for over 40 years, I'm writing to urge you to adopt Package 2 of the proposed Central Coast MPA packages. Package 2 protects the heavily dived areas from Breakwater to Hopkins, off Pacific Grove, and along the reefs east from the Pinnacles past Pescadero Point to Pescadero Rocks and Dali's Reef. Package 2 also has SMCAs at Pacific Grove and Carmel Bay that allow recreational fishing - but unlike Package S, Package 2 includes an important SMCA fishing regulation: while spearfishing is allowed, spearfishing contests are banned.

Spearfishing contests target big reproductive fish, reward competitors for killing rare species such as the Treefish, remove large rare fish of great value to non-spearfishing divers (sightseers and photographers), undermine the concept of "reasonable sustainable take," and favor a very small minority of spearfishermen over all other divers.

These contests take out hundreds of large long-lived fish within a few short hours (typically 1,000 to 2,500 lbs of fish). The impact on the fish populations is obvious to any diver diving these reefs before and after the contests. The contests revisit the same reefs every two or three years.

A "no spearfishing contest" rule for nearshore SMCAs in the Pacific Grove and Carmel Bay SMCAs would be widely supported by the public, and by the great majority of recreational divers. This regulation should be part of any Package that purports to honor the spirit and intent of the Marine Life Protection Act.

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